

# Surviving Healthcare in the Midst of Crisis



Using Trauma-informed interventions to Manage Crisis Reactions in Organizations

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# What Brings Us Here Today

Build awareness of organizational trauma and how it can impact organizations, team, and individuals

**Build**

Consider the appropriate circumstances for use of trauma-informed practices

**Consider**

Commit to investing in actions that will cultivate a trauma-informed VA Montana

**Commit**

# Let's Chat!

## Consider...

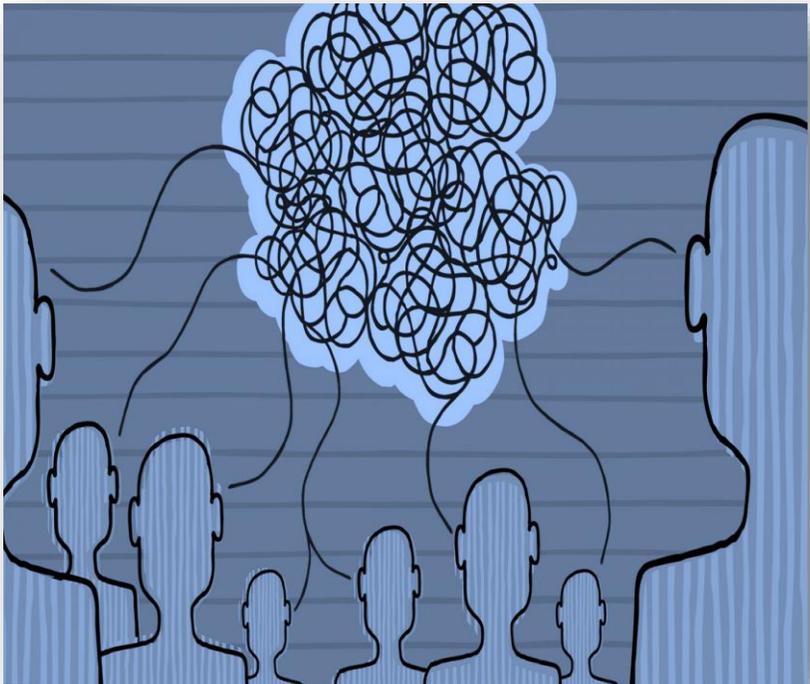
- When you hear the term “trauma”, what are your initial thoughts?
- Would using the term “trauma” be too strong of a term to use when discussing the organizational crises here at your facility?
- How does using the term “trauma” impact how you think about work?



# STARTING ON COMMON GROUND

terms and definitions

# What is Organizational Trauma?

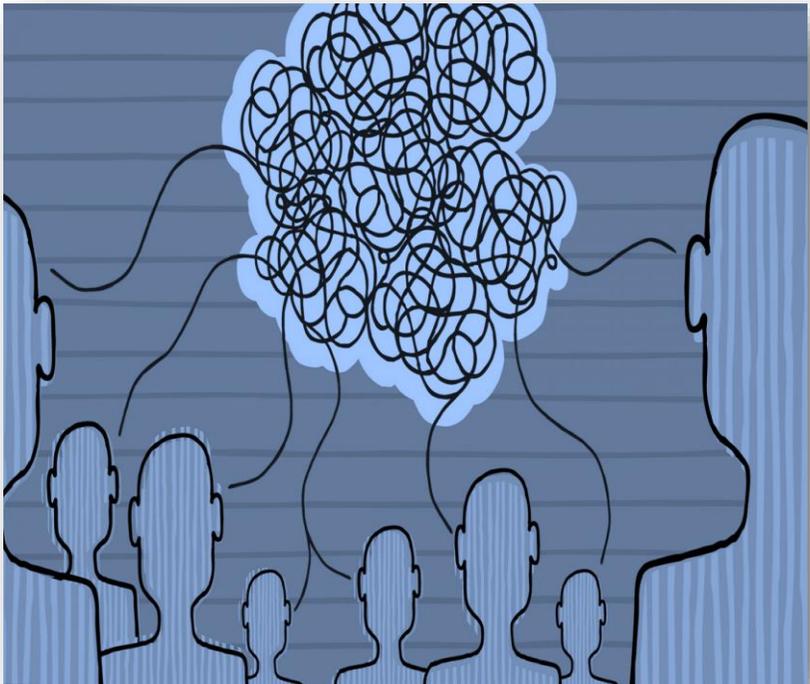


**Organizations, like individuals, can be traumatized, and the result of the traumatic experience can be as devastating for organizations as it is for individuals.**

## **At any level, trauma is:**

- an experience for which a group is emotionally and cognitively unprepared,
- an experience that overwhelms the self-protective structures, and
- leaves the group feeling totally vulnerable and at least temporarily helpless.

# What is Organizational Trauma?

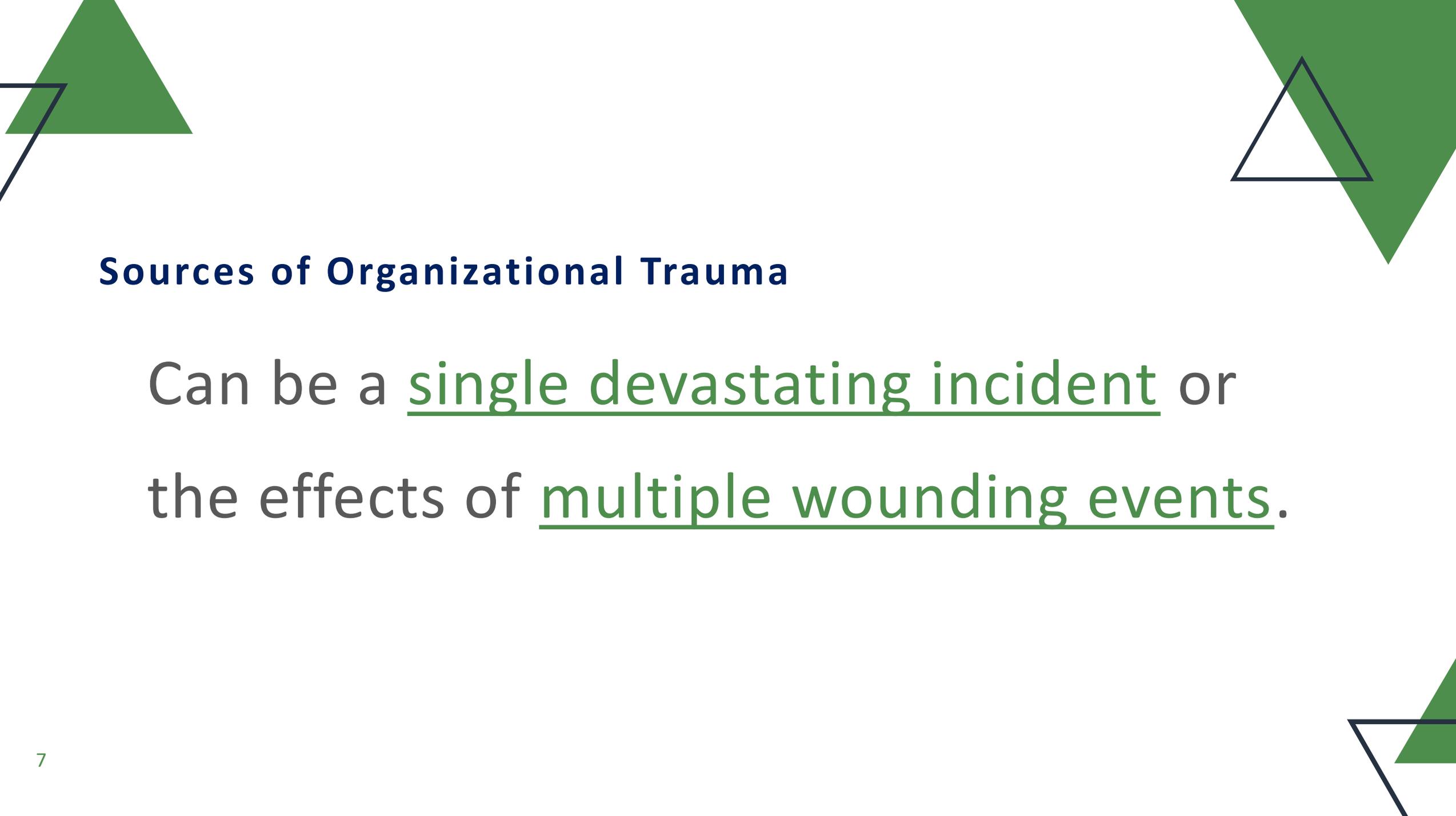


- **A firm definition:**

“An organization’s **over-adaptation to the rupture** of its protective emotional membrane caused by a potentially traumatizing event and involving the appearance of emotional and organizational disturbances” (p. 13).

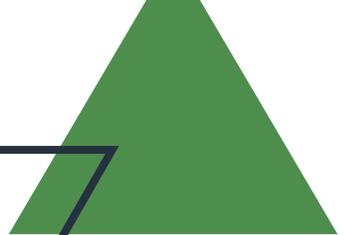
*(Pena, Van den Broucke, Sylin, Leysen, and de Soir (2017))*

- This is a **fairly new concept** which often results in organizations, workgroups, and leaders not fully understanding how to identify or address the challenges.



## Sources of Organizational Trauma

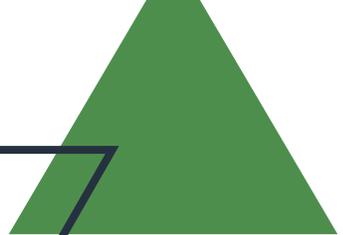
Can be a single devastating incident or  
the effects of multiple wounding events.



## TRAUMATIC STRESS REACTIONS

Over-adaptation to a rupture in a workgroup's self-protective structures.

Reactions manifest as emotional and organizational disturbances.



# Stress Reactions to Trauma in Organizations

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- Causes severe and profound wounds – impacting the emotional and psychological health of the organization and its members.
- Overpowers the organization’s cultural structures and processes.
- Overwhelms the system and its ability to respond to internal and external challenges.
- Distress and dysfunctional processes, ineffective methods of operations, poor decision making, unacceptable, and unethical behaviors, and disruption of interpersonal relationships are the results of a traumatized system.

(Isik, 2017)

# Let's Chat!

- What would you say is the source of organizational trauma in your organization?
- Are these instances past or present occurrences? Both?



# Stress Reactions to Trauma in Organizations

IMPACT	DEFINITION
Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)	Experience of trauma-related symptoms in a worker as a result of witnessing the trauma/ adversity of another; typically quick in onset.
Vicarious Trauma (VT)	Development of negative changes in work world view as a result of the cumulative impact of witnessing trauma/adversity over time.
Burnout	A gradual process of a staff member experiencing feelings of hopelessness, fatigue and being overwhelmed as a result of a lack of support, excessive workloads and unrealistic expectations.
Compassion Fatigue (CF)	Experiencing the combination of STS, VT and/or burnout.
Moral Injury and Moral Distress	An injurious experience that occurs when the worker engages in, fails to prevent or witnesses acts that conflict with their values or beliefs, which can lead to feelings of moral distress such as guilt, shame and anger.
Decision Fatigue	Decrease in decision-making capacity after a long period of making multiple, sometimes rapid decisions.
Vicarious Resilience (VR)	Positive meaning-making and shift of the worker's experience as a result of witnessing the resilience of others.
Vicarious Post-Traumatic Growth (VPTG)	Development of positive changes and growth in worker's world view as a result of witnessing the post-traumatic growth of others.

# Stress Reactions to Trauma in Organizations

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## Reactions in Personnel

- Closed boundaries - Alliances
- Stress and anxiety contagion
- Ineffective methods of operations
- Poor decision making
- Unacceptable and unethical behaviors
- Disruption of interpersonal relationships

## Reactions in Leaders

- Increased authority
- Centralized decision making
- Move from democratic and inclusive leadership styles to styles that are more controlling and transactional
- Ruptured ability to critically problem solve and engage in rational decision making

# Cultural Reactions to Trauma

- Organizational Miasma: defined as a highly toxic and contagious state, manifested as moral and spiritual decay, and exploitation of respect, trust, and cooperative relationships in organizations.

(Gabriel, 2012)

- Organizational Darkness: organizational darkness, referring to workplace violence, aggression, and insensibility to the individual struggles of the employees.

(Linstead, Maréchal, & Griffin, 2014)



# TRAUMA INFORMED ACTIONS

Learning How To Approach

## TRAUMA-INFORMED ACTIONS

### The Four R's



SAMHSA, 2014

# SAMSHA's 6 Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

## Safety

*Throughout the organization, the physical setting is safe & interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety.*

## Peer Support

*Peer support & mutual self-help are key vehicles for utilizing group stories & lived experiences to promote recovery & healing.*

## Empowerment, Voice, & Choice

*Throughout the organization individuals' strengths & experiences are recognized and built upon.*

*Operations & decisions are conducted with transparency with the goal of building & maintaining trust.*

## Trustworthiness & Transparency

*Partnering & the leveling of power to demonstrate healing in relationships & in the meaningful sharing of power & decision-making.*

## Collaboration & Mutuality

*The organization moves past cultural biases by demonstrating that healing happens in relationships despite stereotypes and biases.*

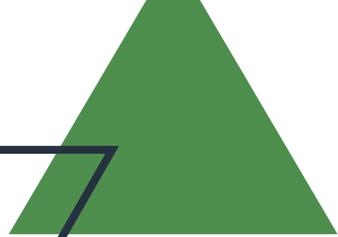
## Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues



# The Key Principles In Action

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- **SAFETY:** A doctor asks a patient what can be done during a procedure to help the patient feel more comfortable.
- **TRUSTWORTHINESS:** A hospital has a daily shift log and check-in debriefing system to ensure transparent communication and consistency between staff on different shifts.
- **CHOICE:** A nurse provides a patient with two referral options for a cardiologist and allows him to choose which he prefers.
- **COLLABORATION:** A hospital has a patient advisory board that meets monthly to discuss hospital practices, policies and feedback gathered from patients.
- **EMPOWERMENT:** A physician assistant asks about what a patient is already doing to help her succeed in reaching her goal of losing weight.



# Using the Values and Principles

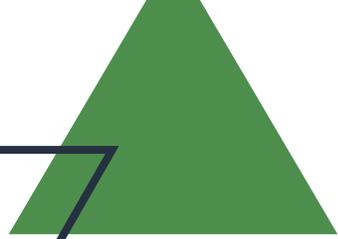
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Ensuring the values and principles is a common theme that all people in an organization/system can focus on and be deliberate about by thinking:

**“How am I ensuring the values and principles in what I do?”**

# LEADING INFORMED

Trauma Informed Leadership



# Why Should You Act?

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## Critical in the healthcare industry:

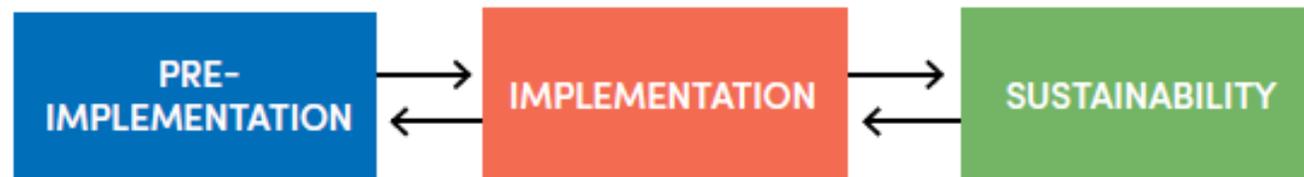
- Employees must provide quality clinical care without impaired judgment
  - Maintain personal meaning associated with their work and the organizational mission
- (Konincks & Teneau, 2010)
- Ignoring systemic traumatization in health organizations results in neglectful clinical performance and client care, leading to the peril and collapse of the organization.

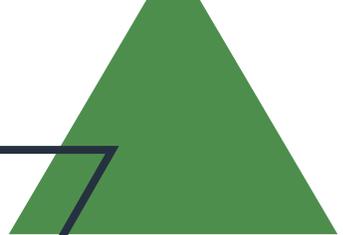
(Vivian & Hormann, 2015)

# Creating the Trauma-Informed Action Plan

## Working the Stages

1. **Pre-Implementation** – system prepares for and builds a foundation for trauma-informed organizational change.
2. **Implementation** – system implements action steps specific to trauma-informed organizational change.
3. **Sustainability** – system further integrates trauma-informed practices into its fabric by establishing mechanisms to consolidate gains, monitor progress and tweak implementation as needed.





# Trauma-Informed Action Planning

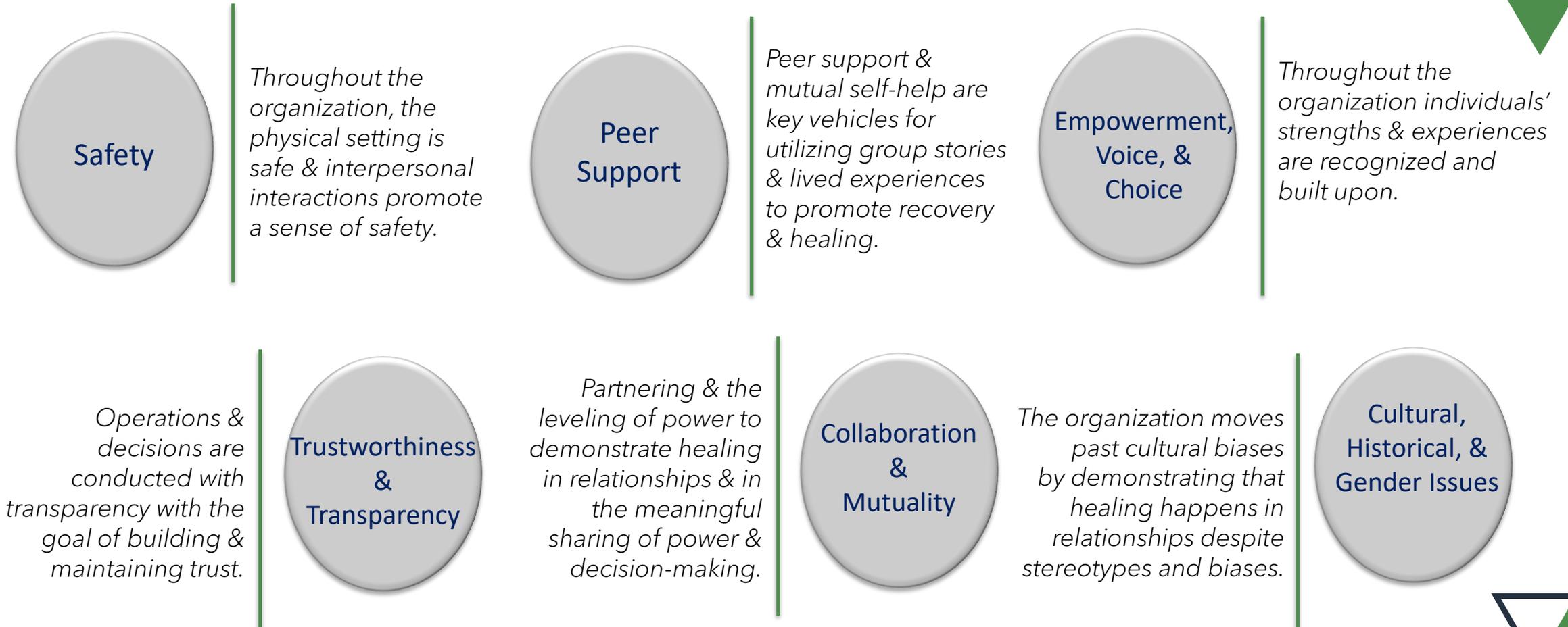
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## Key Development Areas

1. Leading and Communicating
2. Hiring and Orientation Practices
3. Training the Workforce (Clinical & Non-Clinical)
4. Addressing the Impact of the Work
5. Establishing a Safe Environment
6. Screening for Trauma
7. Treating Trauma
8. Collaborating with Others (Partners & Referrals)
9. Reviewing Policies and Procedures
10. Evaluating and Monitoring Progress

Looking at each of these areas, what are some realistic sponsorship opportunities for starting points?

# SAMSHA's 6 Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach



# Let's Chat!

- What are your concerns about applying the key principles and developmental areas at Your organization?
- What barriers do you see ahead?
- How can using the key principles aid in overcoming these barriers?





# Action Planning with the Key Principles



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- Recognize and acknowledge trauma
- Ensure safety, contain anxiety, & normalize experience
- Act as an example – Modeling the Model
- Remember history and interrupt amnesia
- Strengthen organizational identity and esteem
- Institute facilitating structures and processes
- Making Space for Making meaning
- Open system to new energy and information
- Offer optimism, confidence, and energy
- Set priorities to move forward

# Thank you!

